Hollis Taggart Presents *Asian-American Abstraction: Historic to Contemporary*, Gallery's Largest Exhibition to Date

On View July 11 – September 7, Exhibition Showcases East Asia's Impact on American Art, from Abstract Expressionism to the Contributions of the Asian Diaspora

June 26, 2024 – Hollis Taggart is pleased to present *Asian-American Abstraction: Historic to Contemporary*, a group exhibition of 47 historic and contemporary American artists whose oeuvres have been influenced by East Asian artistic traditions. Featuring the work of both Asian-American and American Abstract Expressionist artists, the exhibition traces how the artistic traditions of East Asia have made an indelible mark on American art history. Ranging from 1950s Abstract Expressionist works by artists including Franz Kline, Sam Francis, and Dusti Bongé to recent works by contemporary artists including Ivy Wu, Gwen Yen Chiu, and Hayoon Jay Lee, the exhibition presents an intergenerational dialogue about the lasting international influence of East Asian artistic techniques and philosophies. On view from July 11 through September 7, 2024, and spreading across both floors of the gallery as well as its annex, *Asian-American Abstraction: Historic to Contemporary* will open with a reception on Thursday, July 11, from 5-8PM. A complementary exhibition, *Transcultural Dialogues: The Journey of East Asian Art to the West*, will be presented concurrently at Fu Quimeng Fine Art on the Upper East Side.

Asian-American Abstraction: Historic to Contemporary seeks to continue a curatorial project initiated by curator Jeffrey Wechsler at the Zimmerli Art Museum in 1997 with the acclaimed exhibition *Asian Traditions/Modern Expressions: Asian-American Artists and Abstraction, 1945-1970.* Travelling to various venues in the United States, Japan, and Taiwan, the exhibition explored the myriad ways American artists of Asian heritage incorporated traditional East Asian techniques and philosophies into their art. In *Asian-American Abstraction* at Hollis Taggart, Wechsler and the gallery expanded the thesis of the Zimmerli exhibition not only by including the cutting-edge of contemporary art, but also by extending the historic component to include American Postwar artists whose oeuvres were influenced by an appreciation of East Asian traditions. Expanding the original curatorial premise across time and geography, *Asian-American Abstraction* showcases the creative power of cross-cultural and intergenerational exchange.

"As our gallery has continued its commitment to exhibiting and studying Postwar American Art – taking on the estates of Dusti Bongé, Michael (Corinne) West, Sheila Isham, and Ralph Iwamoto in the past five years alone – we became more and more interested in exploring how these artists are indebted to the rich culture of East Asia," said Hollis Taggart. "At the same time, as our contemporary division has expanded, we have been observing the tremendous contributions of Asian American artists to the contemporary art scene. It is through these parallel developments – as well as through conversations with our colleagues Jeffery Wechsler and Emily Chun – that the idea for this exhibition was born. Both Wechsler and Chun have been instrumental in shaping this exhibition, and we are very grateful to them for providing invaluable curatorial input and sharing their scholarship through their respective catalogue essays."

Contemporary highlights in the exhibition include works by several Asian-American abstractionists who are interested in traditional East Asian writing and incorporating the calligraphic gesture in their work, at times imaginatively abstracting it such as in Oonju Chun's *Sweet Scent* (2017). Another highlight is the work of Hayoon Jay Lee, who Hollis Taggart started representing last year and whose primary material is rice, which she meticulously arranges grain by grain in a meditative process, resulting in undulating abstract works like *Disturbing the Universe* (2022). Also made through a long, focused process are Aesther Chang's abstract landscape paintings, created by layering multiple layers of oil paint on canvas over time, and which are imbued with spiritual and religious influences from both her Christian faith and Eastern heritage, as in *Ether.04* (2023).

As Emily Chun notes in her catalogue essay, "In spite of the simultaneously insufficient and over indexed category of "Asian-American art," such categorizations can be useful in brokering and attending to Asian-American art, which, as seen in this exhibition, compel so many different types of abstraction, each with its own compounds of visibility and invisibility." Rather than attempting to find similarities or thematically organize these works, *Asian-American Abstraction* is intended to be a celebration of the diversity of East-Asian influence on modern and contemporary American art.

About Hollis Taggart
Founded in 1979, Hollis Taggart presents significant works of American art, showcasing the trajectory of American art movements from the Hudson River School to American Modernism and the Post-War and Contemporary eras. Its program is characterized by a deep commitment to scholarship and bringing to the fore the work of under-recognized artists. The gallery has sponsored several catalogue raisonné projects, most recently for the American Surrealist artist Kay Sage, and has been instrumental in advancing knowledge of such artists as Alfred Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, and more recently, Theodoros Stamos, Marjorie Strider, and Michael (Corinne) West. In the summer of 2019, the gallery announced the formal expansion of its primary market business and focus on the presentation of contemporary work. It continues to expand its roster of contemporary artists, focusing on emerging and mid-career talents. With more than 40 years of experience, Hollis Taggart is widely recognized by collectors and curators for its leadership, expertise, and openness, on matters of art history, market trends and opportunities.

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